

Minutes
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
March 25, 2021

The members of the Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Thursday, March 25, 2021, by video conference call. The chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: William Sayre, David Mathers and Denise Banister

Also present: Dan Hathaway (Building Supervisor), Lisa Jasinski (National Grid), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator), Peter Spotts (reporter, Country Journal), Eleanor Warnock (Administrative Assistant)

1. Pole hearing – National Grid – The public hearing opened at 9:00 a.m. Board members reviewed the petition of National Grid to install two poles on Bullard Road near Nash Hill Road, to correct a long span and to provide service for a new home. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to grant permission to National Grid to install two poles on Bullard Road. **So voted** (DM/aye, DB aye, WS aye). The public hearing ended at 9:02 a.m.
2. Building Supervisor – Building Supervisor Dan Hathaway updated the Board on the condition of the various town buildings, with discussion focusing on issues at the Meekins Library, Old Town Hall, and the Town Offices. At the Meekins, water pours off the roof to a particular point to a curtain drain, but ice builds up on the ground and falling icicles have bounced up and broken a window. He will start by talking with Highway Superintendent Dan Banister, who worked in excavation for a number of years. He went on to say that at Old Town Hall two doors need replacing and the building needs painting. He is thinking of using fiberglass doors and paying from the Building Repair line. The Board plans to discuss the needs of the Old Town Hall after the public safety complex is on its way. At the Town Offices he is thinking of replacing the bottom siding at the parking lot entrance and putting in flashing, and he discussed changes that could be made at the front entrance which will allow roof replacement there. Since it looks as if the town will be staying in the Town Offices, the town will need to look at what needs to be done with the building.
3. Appointments – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DB) to appoint Richard Guzowski to the Energy Committee, term to expire June 30, 2021. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye). **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DB) to appoint Melinda McCall as representative to the Hilltown Resource Management Co-operative, term to expire June 30, 2021. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).
4. Highway trailer – surplus – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to surplus the 2003 Econoline Trailer. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). The trailer has been replaced.
5. Meekins mini-split repair – **Motion** was made and seconded (DB/DM) to repair the mini-split at the library, as quoted by Jamrog, and to use the Town Repair line. **So voted** (DB aye, DM aye, WS aye).

6. Proposed wetlands protection bylaw – Board members were not in favor of the Wetlands Protection Bylaw proposed by the Conservation Commission. Discussion included that it is more restrictive than the current Wetlands Protection Act, and members expressed concern about the impact on the residents and what the real need would be to add the greater restrictions and fines. In order for the Board to consider it, they would want the Conservation Commission to hold a listening session to get feedback from the community. The Town Administrator will notify the Conservation Commission.

7. Budget – Police – The Police Chief has accepted the negotiated offer of a salary increase of \$2,000 each year for the next three years plus any town-wide COLA increases. This is contingent on town meeting approval. The Police Department thinks that their labor line can handle the effects of the new POST (Peace Officer Standard Training) legislation

8. Capital Planning –

Police cruiser – The Police Chief felt that the 2014 chief’s cruiser, with body rust and other issues, should be replaced this year, FY22, along with the 2018 cruiser that was totaled, but that the next replacement of those should be pushed to FY27 and FY29 to stagger them. Board members agreed to recommend replacing the 2014 vehicle this year, and felt that pushing out the replacement to five to seven years was appropriate. They also discussed a possible schedule whereby the Chief gets a new vehicle each time that one is replaced, and her old one becomes a patrol car.

Fire truck – The Fire Department has proposed replacing Engine 3 with a rescue truck for \$232,536. Selectman David Mathers will drive the old truck in the next few days to evaluate its safety. The Fire Chief has asked someone to make an estimate on repairs. It was noted that it is hard to ask taxpayers to buy a new truck this year when the town is asking them to pay millions for a public safety complex.

9. Town Administrator –

Resignation – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi submitted her resignation, with her last day to be May 20. She spoke of appreciating the opportunity to serve the Select Board and the residents of Williamsburg. She added that the town is well poised for moving forward, with great department heads and great leadership in the community. She emphasized that change is good and will bring new ideas, and that it is important for her to have a new challenge as well. Board members spoke warmly of how outstanding Charlene has been, saying that losing her is an emotional issue as well as a work issue. She has outperformed any and all expectations, and she has worked more than full-time the entire time has been here. They have learned so much from her. Working with her has been a pleasure and they will miss her. Northampton and Mayor Narkewicz are very lucky. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to accept the resignation of Charlene Nardi as Town Administrator, effective May 20, with very deep regret and inexpressible thanks for everything she has done. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

Next steps – The Board will put together a search committee and will look for a permanent person, not an interim. Charlene noted that other nearby towns are also looking. The job description and the ad were approved. Application deadline will be Friday, April 16. Board members discussed possible people for the search committee and will meet again on Thursday, April 1, at 1:30 to discuss further.

10. Town Administrator's report –

Covid-19 award to businesses – Town Administrator Charlene Nardi reported that the state is awarding \$250,000 to small Hilltown businesses to help them recoup some losses that they have seen under Covid-19, and the owner of the Williamsburg Snack is getting an award. Sen. Hinds is hosting the event at the Snack Bar on Monday, March 29. Selectmen planned to attend.

Covid-19 and department reports – She reported that there are five active Covid cases in town. All departments are doing well. **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) that all public buildings (excluding schools) will remain closed to the public until at least April 30. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

Voting by mail – The Governor has extended voting by mail. The possible debt exclusion all-day vote is scheduled for April 19 and the annual town election is May 3.

LED streetlights – The National Grid contact person has said that the Kellogg Road solar farm company is paying National Grid for replacing the poles. Charlene has asked the Assessors to check with their consultant, who negotiated the PILOT agreement, about a similar arrangement, and she may talk with Town Counsel.

LED streetlight buy back – National Grid is beginning an internal conversation about the possibility of buying back streetlights. Discussion included reaching out to state representatives, the effect on grant money, and the effect on electric rates.

Fuel bids – She has signed the paperwork to participate in the FRCOG fuel bid; the cost is \$340 to participate.

Planning Board work on zoning bylaws – The Planning Board is holding a listening session next Monday about the proposed changes to detached apartments and solar installations. They plan a public hearing for mid-April, with the proposed changes going to Annual Town Meeting.

Janitor / custodian – Tammy Johnson has been hired temporarily to do cleaning at the Town Offices and is doing an excellent job. The budget is for 14½ hours per week.

American Rescue Plan Act – The town is expected to get an estimated \$721,550 in federal money, starting March 3, 2021, and going through December 31, 2024, to respond to public health emergencies and negative economic effects. The four areas that it can be spent on are: economic development and business loans; premium pay for essential workers; government services affected by reduction in municipal revenues; and water/sewer and broadband infrastructure. Federal guidelines will be forthcoming.

Planning for annual Town Meeting – Charlene confirmed that the warrant will be completed, the motions drafted, the tent confirmed, and everything should be set by the time she leaves.

11. Minutes – **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of March 11 regular meeting and March 11 executive session. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye). **Motion** was made and seconded (DM/DB) to approve the minutes of March 17 regular meeting. **So voted** (DM aye, DB aye, WS aye).

12. Warrant – Selectman Dave Mathers will review and sign the warrant.

Documents used

Agenda and notes

Pole hearing petition

Letters of interest
Wetlands Protection proposed bylaw
Minutes

Adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Approved:

Clerk